

Testimony for Public Hearing on H.B. No.5030

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GENERAL EDUCATION CORE OF COURSES
TO ALLOW FOR THE SEAMLESS TRANSFER FROM THE REGIONAL COMMUNITY-TECHNICAL
COLLEGE SYSTEM TO THE CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM AND THE UNIVERSITY
OF CONNECTICUT.

I am a faculty member in the Department of Social Work at Southern Connecticut State University. Approximately one half of the students who are accepted into our BSW program are transfer students, and most of those students are from other public Connecticut colleges and universities. I am also the chair of the University Wide Impact Committee, a subcommittee of Southern's University Curriculum Forum, which guides and approves courses and university-wide curriculum on our campus. I am thus quite familiar with transfer student experiences moving from one school to another.

Given that experience, I support the intent of the proposed bill, to "allow for the seamless transfer" but I want to contextualize it in three related topics to raise other options for achieving the stated intent:

1. Emphasis on competencies, not lists of courses. In my experience, students who do not have a "seamless transfer" are those who either switch their majors/career paths or have not successfully completed some of the core liberal arts skills courses that are required for higher level study, particularly composition and mathematics. At Southern, we have implemented a developmentally based Liberal Education Program (LEP) where students cannot move on to study certain areas of knowledge until they demonstrate the ability to perform critical thinking tasks, engage in quantitative reasoning, and communicate effectively in writing. The LEP is a competency-based general education program, not a list of courses. The LEP understands that these core skills are what students need to participate in a changing and challenging workforce environment. Simply focusing on a list of general education courses will move us backwards and away from the primary concern of higher education today: preparing our graduates to be productive and effective citizens who can flexibly adapt to emerging and shifting job opportunities.
2. Advising and Communication processes. I provide "pre-advising" for prospective transfer students who plan to transfer from a community college to Southern's undergraduate social work program. In addition, our university academic advisors meet personally with students in the COMPACT agreement each semester. These contacts inform students about the university and major-specific requirements at Southern, and guide student choices regarding the courses they take at the community college. Students then come to Southern able to complete their degree in a timely manner. My point here is that many students are already experiencing a "seamless transfer" when they have signed the COMPACT agreement or when they have met with me to



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discuss the social work requirements (and I am confident that similar contacts are happening for students in other majors as well). Would it be more useful to explore these options instead of a general education core?

3. Developmental preparation in local school districts. Increasingly, students attending community colleges and CSU's are placing in remedial courses, particularly for mathematics and composition. Students are therefore using financial aid and accumulating college credits for preparation that needs to come prior to college. Some school districts are offering remedial mathematics and compositions courses in local high schools (post graduation) to help students become "college ready" before they begin taking courses at a community college. I urge this committee to consider ways in which you could support this cost-saving and "seamless transfer" approach to higher education.

Thank you for your time. Please contact me if you need additional information.

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